

VIA: AIR
(Specify air or sea pouch)

KAPOK # ¹⁸⁸⁹~~1898~~
Dispatch No. SGAA-559.3

SECURITY INFORMATION
CLASSIFICATION
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AUG 18 1953

To : Chief, SE
Attn: ☐

Date _____

From : Senior Representative, ☐ *iac*

SUBJECT: GENERAL- BGFIEND/PARAM
SPECIFIC- Review of Apple/3 W/T Contacts

1. In an effort to help Headquarters evaluate properly the fate of Apple/3 we have endeavored to review each radio message and comment upon them, both from the possibility of a controlled and an uncontrolled operation. A great deal of second guessing has gone on concerning the fate of Apple/3. It is not our intention in this report to draw any definite conclusions but merely to state the facts and where possible to interject our views in the hope that they may be able to throw further light on the subject.

2. Following is the review of Apple/3 messages from the night of the drop:

a. Message no. 144 states that "Hamit with 2 friends arrived." Nothing significant in this message to indicate a controlled operation.

b. Message no. 145 reports GABNEGATE'S condition and the fact that patrols were reported in the D/Z area. The report of GABNEGATE'S injury seems quite normal when we consider that it was his first jump and secondly that throughout the team's training period GABNEGATE was definitely the least capable of the 3 man team. Furthermore, he expressed some concern as to his fear of landing properly. On the other hand we can say that it is possible but highly improbable that the team was controlled from the time of the drop. If an injury was ~~was~~ intended to be used by the opposition as an explanation for future delays, their choice of GABNEGATE was excellent in view of the above. However, they might have been more realistic if they informed us that swelling rivers would cause some delay in exfiltration.

c. Message no. 146 continues to report the injured man's condition and his hindering the team's quick movement. Apple/3 stated that "they had need of help, but that another drop at this time would present some danger." If we assume that Apple/3 was controlled, then refusal to accept a drop could indicate that the opposition was preparing us for a request to come at a later date when the enemy would be well placed to get 1) the aircraft, 2) additional personnel and 3) material, or all three. On the other hand, if we continue to believe that Apple/3 were not controlled, their refusal to accept a second drop in the same area is in line with their past attitude in fearing too much air activity in their area of operation.

d. In message no;

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d. In message no. 148 the team reported its position and notified base that Apple/2 and Apple/3 were separating on 12 May and that base should arrange to activate contact with Apple/3 according to plan. Message no. 149 received on the same date was a request from AIRTIGHT to base to have RNCERTAIN's needs fulfilled in AIRTIGHT's absence. In regard to message 148, Apple/3 has been briefed to activate W/T contact with base on the first day after separating from the reception group. If they were captured, it is possible that along with having given the enemy all of their danger control signals they would also have told them that they must activate their link the day following their separation from Apple/2. In regard to message 149 knowing the mentality of the persons concerned we would have to say that RNCERTAIN would have felt it necessary for the exfiltrating leader to get base's assurance that RNCERTAIN and Apple/2 would be supported in AIRTIGHT's absence. The other view that might be taken in regard to this message is that the controlling authorities may have felt that unless base answered AIRTIGHT's request in the affirmative, then their efforts should be directed only on Apple/3. (This, of course, follows only if it is believed that Apple/2 was controlled prior to the Apple/3 infiltration and that both teams were being played back.)

3. We now start a new series of messages coming from Apple/3 on the exfiltration route:

a. In message no. 1 from Apple/3, we are informed that the two groups would split and we were informed of their position. Message no. 2 received on the same date was a repeat of message 149 which base was unable to decode properly.

b. In message no. 3 Apple/3 informed base that they would have to change their direction of exfiltration and not follow the route used last year because GABNEGATE and two other members of the group were too weak to walk the mountains. The fact that the team notified us in advance that their exfiltration route would be changed could serve to indicate that control is more possible than previously indicated. We take this point of view when we realize that the opposition would certainly suspect that we would be using D/F facilities and their position reports would have to jibe with our D/F fixes. We, however, feel that the route chosen by Apple/3 is very sensible because they would be passing very close to RNPULOG's area and would thus be in a position to receive aid in the event of trouble.

c. In message no. 4 they informed us that they would not be in a position to await a resupply drop and that AIRTIGHT was suffering with dysentery. Once again, if controlled, the opposition has not missed any opportunity to keep the reporting in the messages completely true. (In checking with [redacted] and AIROMETER, I was able to learn that AIRTIGHT had for a number of years been suffering from what they called "bleeding dysentery.")

d. Message no. 5 only reports the team's position.

e. Message no. 6

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e. Message no. 6 reported their position and they informed us that it would be necessary to stop for a few days. The general area that they reported was known to RNPULOG who had received aid in this area while passing through as a member of Pear Team.

f. In message no. 7 Apple/3 requested food and medicine for AIRTIGHT but again the team stated that they were unable to receive a drop. They reported their position and notified us they were heading for the border. Here I believe the opposition had a good opportunity to receive supplies and still keep the operation active and all possible opportunity to get the covert craft. Yet the team itself refused the drop. This writer finds it extremely difficult to believe that if this group were controlled that the opposition would play them back for the short period that they did without fully exploiting the potential before closing this circuit down. Apple/3's position on this contact was very dangerous. It was ascertained in talking with the Greek border authorities that the high area NNW of their position was safe, but that a large pursuit unit held the wooded area leading out of the mountains. We had planned upon receiving this message to make a diversionary drop to the West of Apple/3's position in the hope of taking pressure away from them.

g. In message no. 8 we received only a position report.

h. In message no. 9 the team gave its present position and informed us that "a few days before there had been an action in the zone of Kolonjia." This message was received on 3 June. In checking with the Greek border authorities, we were informed that sometime between 29 May and 2 June one of the Greek sponsored teams had been ambushed and fought its way back to the Greek border. We do not attach any great significance to the report of action in the area because, if the team were controlled, then the opposition knowing that the Greek team crossed safely would be forced to report this action to us in order to maintain a good controlled operation. If the team were not under control, we can certainly feel that they were among friends and still able to exfiltrate safely.

i. In message no. 10 the team reported that they ran into a Communist force at L-2541. RNPULOG was wounded and as a result a new exfiltration route would be necessary. We have not been able to place any type of action in this area on the 5th of June. Our only comment in regard to this message is that, if we follow the thesis that control of the group dates back prior to our drop, then it would seem more likely that the opposition would know that our greatest interest was in AIRTIGHT and therefore we would suspect that they would have used him as the bait.

j. In message no. 11 the team reported its new position and informed base of RNPULOG's condition. Furthermore Apple/3 stated that their difficulty was caused by base's attempt to infiltrate additional teams in the area through which Apple/3 was attempting to exfiltrate. This message is significant because

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to this writer it shows a trace of RNPULOG's hand in the message. On all past infiltration attempts he has expressed a great concern that other groups be kept out of the border area during his exfiltration. We realize that the opposition could have made this statement.

k. We first stated that in msg. no. 12 the team reported its new position and informed us that RNPULOG was unable to move and requested that base send a guide to help the team exfiltrate. The portion of this message which at first appeared to be a request for a guide was garbled. Because of the wording of this message and the garbled portion some doctoring up was required. This writer at the time was at the border area running the operation; the message was received at base and retransmitted to me at the border. In translating and interpreting this message, I believed that the team requested not a guide from the outside but someone within the country who could be contacted to lead the team out. My interpretation may have been prejudiced by the fact that I knew that 1) RNPULOG was aware that no guides of his calibre were available to us, 2) that prior to infiltration our teams were informed that we could identify friendly contacts for them along their route of travel who could be called upon for aid and 3) that if anything the team would not want another infiltration in their general area because as they pointed out in message no. 11, their last previous contact, their difficulty was caused by base's attempt to infiltrate additional teams in the area through which Apple/3 was exfiltrating furthermore, it must be stated that it was not until my return to Athens that the two views on the message could be discussed. The view expressed by the other persons translating was that Apple/3 requested a guide from base, but they further felt that my translation was possible. We could further assume that it was possible that RNPULOG's condition was such that Apple/3's leader did not even discuss the message with him and therefore would not have known about the above made point 1). Yet even if this were the case AIRTIGHT was completely aware of points 2) and 3). Apple/3's request for a guide could mean that the opposition had built us up enough by bringing the team within our reach and that now the proper moment had come to neutralize other BGFIEND assets. I personally discount the belief that the opposition would be willing to settle for so little gain as one guide, when so much was available to them for the asking. On the other hand, a request for a guide from within the country is in order when we realize that only RNPULOG was capable of executing a successful exfiltration.

Our action in light of their request for a guide was to order them to follow a specific route for exfiltration which had been planned after long discussions with the Greek border units. We further informed the team that aid would be forthcoming from our side. The aid was to be in the form of Greek patrols which would be placed in such a position that covering fire could be brought to bear on the opposition and thereby clearing the exfiltration route. Our message no. 5 to Apple/3 stated that Apple's message no. 12 was garbled and that if Hamit was unable to travel that Zenel and one man should exfiltrate to receive medicine, help and further instructions. For the record, this course was taken only as a stalling tactic and was not intended to gain any results. It has been necessary to go into this lengthy explanation in order to clarify

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message no. 12. Furthermore, I have stated that if the message from Apple/3 requested a guide, we could have considered the message suspicious and even a good indication of control.

l. In message no. 13 the team answered that they were in accord with our instructions but that RNPOTLOG's condition forced the team to remain in their present area for a few days.

m. In message no. 14 the team replied to our message no. 5 which instructed them to send AIRTIGHT and one guide out for help, medicine and further instructions. We realized beforehand that no guide was available to the team but it was thought that with the exfiltration route having been planned for the team that some attempt would be made to determine the true state of Apple/3. The team further reported in this message that RNPOTLOG refused to stay behind and that the team would follow base's instructions. They ended with a position report.

n. In messages 15 and 16 the team gave only position reports which showed a steady movement toward the Greek border. Message no. 16 received on 18 June was the last contact with Apple/3.

o. Our last outgoing message to Apple/3 on 18 June cautioned the team's movement and instructed them to attempt to cross in the next two nights. We further informed them that the recommended zone had been quiet for one week. We requested their reply on the following day.

4. Significant Points:

a. As far as can be determined the first operating Apple/3's radio was that of RNDOMINO.

b. All control signals were proper throughout the whole operation.

c. Apple/3 was consistent in refusing to accept air drops even in time of great need. This pattern had been established at the time of Apple's infiltration in 1952.

d. The fact that Apple/3 reported its position with every change of location is of interest because only RNPOTLOG had been briefed to do so on the exfiltration route. In the past Apple/3 had not given us position reports on each contact.

5. From this report it should be evident that the questions of Apple/2 and Apple/3 control remain unanswered. But of even greater significance is the manner in which the opposition failed to utilize Apple/3, if they were controlled.

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17 August 1953

Distribution: 3-Wash, 1-Vital Documents
1-Chrono, 1-Subject, 1-XO, 2-BGFIEND

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